

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

**Tuesday, March 10, 2008
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Wright called the Newington Town Council Special Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Helen Nelson Room of the Newington Town Hall.

I PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II ROLL CALL

Councilors Present

Councilor Banach (arr. 7:07)

Councilor Boni

Councilor Bottalico

Councilor Bowen

Councilor Cohen

Councilor Lenares

Councilor Nagel

Councilor Nasinnyk

Mayor Wright

Also Present:

John L. Salomone, Town Manager

Ann Harter, Director of Finance

Lisa Rydecki, Deputy Finance Director

Lori Verreault, Executive Assistant

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -- ON AGENDA - None

IV CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A Overview of budget and budget procedures: John L. Salomone

Mr. Salomone gave a brief overview of the proposed budget for FY 2008-09. Overall the proposed budget has increased by \$3,028,141, or 3.37%, over FY 2007-08, including both the Board of Education and the Town budgets. With some additional revenues, the proposed tax increase was lowered to 2.9%. Several challenges to the formulation of the budget included only a small increase in State Aid (\$229,000) and a downturn in interest rates (\$525,000). Two major areas of change were in the Facilities Management area with a reorganization of personnel and the addition of three new Police Officers to the Police Department. Overall there is a 3.5% increase in General Government operations. Major drivers were salary increases, the proposed new Police officers, implementation of the Pay Per Call Plan for the Fire Department, and increased costs for Motor Fuel, Utilities, Construction Materials, etc. The Capital Improvements Plan has not yet been finalized but the proposed budget includes \$3.3 million total, with \$1.25 million for the Board of Education. Employee Benefits reflects a 10% decrease due to the successful plan design changes negotiated as well as increased cost sharing, a favorable claims trend and increased deductibles. Defined benefit plan contributions are up 5%. The Town's share of the MDC level is up 4%; this does not include the surcharge to the residents to fund the Clean Water Project. CRRRA is up due to an increase in the tipping fee to \$72/ton. Debt Service is down \$70,000. The Board of Education requested budget was passed through unchanged at \$56,072,142, or a 4.68% increase. Property Taxes are proposed to fund 76.3% of the budget, Non-Tax Revenue 21.5% and \$2,000,000 from the General Fund Balance 2.2%. The Grand List increased 1.6%. Under the proposed budget, the Mill Rate would increase .78 mill to 27.69 mills, or 2.9%.

B Budget Review – Dept. of Parks and Recreation: Wendy Rubin, Superintendent

Major changes in this department include the transfer of a part-time Custodian and Utility/Maintenance related costs to Facilities Management. A part-time Town Center Maintainer is added as well as additional hours to maintain the Town cemeteries. Other increases are in the cost for chemicals and fertilizers.

- C. Budget Review – General Government (Town Council, Town Manager, Finance, Courts, Elections, Town Attorney, Personnel, Town Clerk/Records Administration, General Services, Facilities Management): John L. Salomone

Major changes are the proposed membership in CCM, several personnel changes, additional costs under Elections related to the new voting system - primarily maintenance and cost of printing ballots, and the transfer of most utility/maintenance related costs to Facilities Management.

There was general discussion about the ability to combine duplicate functions performed by the Town and the Board of Education (payroll, computer systems).

The Council requested additional information regarding the shift of Utilities/Maintenance functions to Facilities Management. Several Councilors felt it was good to have those costs under one area as it provides a more realistic view of actual departmental operations. Councilor Bowen suggested that the Town Manager form a committee comprised of the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, etc. to brainstorm ways in which to save money.

V PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -- ON AGENDA

Sharon Braverman, Board of Education Liaison to Town Council: Suggested consolidation of copiers with one vendor to assist in obtaining better pricing on maintenance contracts, etc.

VI REMARKS BY COUNCILORS - None.

VII EXECUTIVE SESSION RE PERSONNEL, LITIGATION

Motion to go into executive session was made at 9:20 p.m. by Councilor Nasinnyk seconded by Councilor Bowen. Motion passed 9-0. People present included Councilors, Town Manager John Salomone and Labor Attorney Ken Plumb. Topics covered were Personnel and Litigation.

Motion to adjourn executive session was made at 10:20 p.m. by Councilor Bowen, seconded by Councilor Boni. Motion passed 9-0.

VIII AJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the Special Meeting was made by Councilor Bowen at 10:20 p.m., seconded by Councilor Boni. Motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Verreault
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager